

VOL. II, No. 39.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3, 1887.

PRICE \$2.50 PER ANNUM.

THE

Weekly Discourse;

CONTAINING

SPIRITUAL SERMONS

BY THE GUIDES OF

Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond.



CHICAGO, ILL.:

THE SPIRITUAL PUBLISHING CO.,
64 UNION PARK PLACE.

THE DUTY OF THE HOUR

IN THE LIGHT OF SPIRITUALISM;

IN VIEW OF RECENT EVENTS.

BY THE BAND OF GUIDES.

DELIVERED AT CHICAGO. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1887.

INVOCATION.

Parent of all souls; Life of all life; Thou Infinite God; Thou Eternal Love; Thou Divine Wisdom: unto Thee Thy children would ever turn in praises and in thanksgivings for the abundance of Thy blessings. They would praise Thee for the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the sky, for the harmony and order of the universe, for that divine law that out of chaos hath fashioned the order of the firmament, and that baptism of life that giveth unto each leaf and flower the message of Thy love. O God, we praise Thee for the government of souls; for that law within which the highest and the best dominate in eternity and rule by the immutable decrees of Thy love, wisdom, and truth. May every heart turn unto that highest government, may each spirit be ruled and guided by the light that cometh therefrom, may all learn with loving-kindness, with such knowledge of true and divine love as casteth out all fear and hatred, to turn to Thee in every hour of triumph, in every season of adversity, in every great wrong, knowing that Thou alone canst bring strength, Thy love and truth alone canst bring comfort, and the message of Thy Spirit alone can give unto each the knowledge of that which is right. May all with perfect trust and divine praise turn unto Thee forever. Amen.

DISCOURSE.

"It has been said: Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without cause hath already committed murder in his heart."

"Ye have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you: love your enemies and bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you."

In another place Jesus said: "return not evil for evil, but overcome evil with good."

These and a dozen more paragraphs might be quoted from the Scriptures of the words of Christ; yet it is the law, unfortunately, in Christian lands to love your neighbors as long as they please you and to hate your enemies, and to overcome, or attempt to overcome, evil with evil in return.

Against this interpretation of Christianity we protest now and shall forever.

It is the highest law announced, not only by Jesus of Nazareth, but by the Buddhas of every age, and philosophers, and the highest teachers that mankind have had, that the most ennobling and exalting sentiment of the human heart is the love of humanity; that the highest law of any and all lands, is the law of loving-kindness.

In perfect love, without any thought of revenge, with the feelings of utmost kindness toward all mankind, with the thought toward those from whom we differ as essentially as the day from the night of "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"; such is the spirit of our utterance to night.

Under any and all circumstances we not only deplore the taking of human life, but we consider from our standpoint, the standpoint of spiritual teaching, of Christian teaching in every age, that it is wholly unjustifiable as a means of righting any wrong, or of bringing any human being to judgment. In view of spiritual teaching, while we cannot censure those, who under the impetus of duty, or impelled by a sense of wrong, may be driven to deeds of retaliation, we still do not think this the highest way.

The advocacy of the principles of truth would teach men not only to endure wrong, but to protest against it with every moral power; not with physical violence. But if because of human slavery men have been driven to rise in insurrection, if because of wrong men have been induced to advocate measures of violence in return for violence received, ours is not the voice to join with those who have committed violence against them, in adding another wrong to the injustice already heaped upon them. We shall protest against violence of human rights and privileges wherever we may see it. We shall protest against accumulated wrongs whenever and wherever an opportunity offers; and this night we pledge ourselves to unceasingly pour forth our voice for the redress of those wrongs inflicted upon the poor, by whomsoever they may be inflicted, under whatever sanction of human law they be perpetrated.

The poor, the despised, the downtrodden, the helpless of all lands are the wards of the skies. It is useless for human beings advocating the, "peace on earth and good will to man" that Christ taught, to fail to uplift their voices in any and every hour against the injustice and wrong of man toward man. It is unjust, whatever may be the wisdom of any method, or the mistake of any method, toward righting a wrong, that those who are powerless because of poverty shall be subjugated and cruelly treated by those who have power.

If there were no acknowledged wrongs to be righted in the direction that recent events have pointed out there would be no reason for our utterances today; but because there are monstrous wrongs, wrongs against which the masses of the people, and even that middle class that are forever seeking for gold and

have no time to think of political matters, wrongs which even they, confess are monstrous and should be righted, but which they are powerless to right, because they will not uplift their voices and their actions together and in time.

It is true that the dominant power of wealth governs this country; it is true that in the old world the dominant power of class, wealth, and monarchical institutions govern the countries of Europe; it is true that the crystalization of power in the hands of any individual or monopoly is as great a tyranny as the crystalization of power in the hands of a monarch; that monopoly stands for tyranny in this country as the monarch or emperor stands for tyranny in the old world. It is that against which you are endeavoring with all your legitimate means to guard.

There can be no competition, which it is said is the life of commerce, where there is a monopoly. Any one with half a mind, or one third, on this subject, without being a student of statesmanship or political economy, can see that if power is vested in a certain direction in the hands of monopolies it kills that competition which you declare is the life of trade. Yet you are powerless to overcome it; the very competition itself has a tendency toward it. The true secret and the highest methods have not yet been found, or have not been confessed by the world.

Now is it not better instead of turning ones eyes away from these facts, from their legitimate issues and saying, we have nothing to do with this, this is too exciting a subject of conversation, or of teaching, or of thought, to say; let us consider this matter, let us see to it seriously that these questions are met and solved in a legitimate way? Because it is very evident from the history of the past, that if they are not met and solved in a legitimate way they will have to be met and solved in another way. It is not our voice that brings this about if we say so. He who predicts the thunder-storm does not make the thunder-storm. Some people think if you talk about a conflict that you precipitate a conflict. It reminds us of an old lady across the water who said she did wish that they did not have a weather bureau in America, for there had never been any decent weather since. So the predictions by your meteorological stations were considered by this lady to make the disturbances in the atmosphere. As well might you arraign the sailor, who on the ocean sees along the horizon the low lines of clouds that mark the impending peril, when he cries out that the storm is approaching, to be ready for it: it is no evidence that he made the storm; but woe betide him if the sails are not furled and every thing made ready when the storm does come.

It is in such an emergency that we cry out to you today to be prepared for the storm; but be prepared after the manner of the spirit, not of the body; be prepared after the manner of God, not of man; be prepared after the manner of the Soul and not the manner of Mammon; and if you are so prepared no voice shall make you afraid, no tempest shall disturb you, because you will have found your anchorage in that highest truth and that divinest love which no man can possess and fear anything. It is under precisely this stress of circumstances that we have been speaking to you for the last twenty or thirty years, to make ready your hearts and lives, under the discipline of the skies, to meet that which may come. It is under these circumstances that we speak to you today; the mistake is in supposing that man can have the truth and still go on in worldly ways. Jesus said that "no man can serve two masters:" "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." If Mammon is so dear, if under whatever form Mammon may be presented to you that is the highest you can serve, then do not pretend to worship God, or truth, or serve mankind, but follow in the usual methods of Mammon, prosper in the world and be impoverished in soul. But if it is God, humanity, and truth that you wish to serve, if the light of truth is valuable to you in any way, then you will turn toward that truth and declare it to be the highest and best.

We have been asked this evening: whether the decision of the highest court in this State and in this land is not such an authority that men should submit to it and be silent on the subject? If human courts are infallible, if the law of this land as it is carried out is perfect, if human judges are supreme in wisdom, if they interpret always correctly the law of the land, and if the laws of the land are always founded in justice, then keep silent; but why do you ever have amendments to laws, why is there a legislature continually convening to make new laws, why are many of the laws repealed and other ones fashioned if the laws are perfect? Of what value is a court of appeal, even the highest court, if there can be no mistakes made in inferior courts? Must it be supposed that those sitting in the ermine of the judicial power of the land which is the final and only place of petition, have absolute knowledge, infallible truth, and unswerving justice? Honest they may be, sincere to a fault, but just as imperfect in their interpretation of the law as other men. If you never speak against any decision of any court of law in your land, then you never will have any reforms. The whole population consider that there is needed reforms, especially the opposing political party to that which controls the offices and the emoluments thereof during certain periods. If it is true, as we say, that human judgments are fallible, then we have not only the right of conviction, but the right to express that we do not consider certain decisions correct. In view of all the knowledge that we have, in view of such testimony as we have been enabled to gather, we do not consider the recent decision of the Supreme Court of your state and the refusal of the Supreme Court of the United States to interfere therewith, as in accordance with justice, and we have a right to say it. In view of all these facts we declare that we do not consider that they have acted in accordance with the highest justice.

We do not ask you to kill a judge, or to do any violence to a jury, but we ask you to make the law powerless to do injustice by your combined moral strength. Behind the courts, and behind the judiciary, is the public opinion of this land upon which laws are fashioned and enforced; we ask you as citizens of an enlightened state, as those claiming Christianity as the foundation of the civilization of today, as those who hope for the highest unfoldment of the human race, to see to it that you never sleep nor let any grass grow beneath your feet until you have wiped out that relic of barbarism—the scaffold, the gallows from your land. We ask you to see to it that human lives, even those that may have committed the greatest wrong, shall not be sacrificed under the name of the law, when you ask men to respect the lives of their fellow men. If there is no higher weapon in this boasted land of peace and civilization to use, then let us go back to the dark ages, let us restore the inquisition and the rack, and have done with the pretense of civilization. What we are here to ask is for you to see to it that those who have charge of the laws of the land shall not set the example in violence. We say this without any ill-will to those who under the mandate of the people are fulfilling what the people require. We are talking now to the moral sentiment of the people; we ask you to see to it that your municipal officers, those who occupy positions under higher authorities, shall not have it in their power to interpret the law, but shall have it interpreted: shall not be in the possession of weapons whereby any life can be taken or any human being maimed. We ask you that if you must have police to preserve your property, that you see to it that human life is sacred under the hands of that police. It is not a part of Christian civilization to entrust its servants to consider what the interpretation of the law is. It is not a part of the civilization of this country to give authority to any inspector or superintendent of the police to take human life. If it is the province of the police to take life what are your courts of justice for?

Now this is one of the issues: It is simply that a watchman stationed to keep order on the streets has not the charge of life slaying. A young man whom a policeman followed, who was going peaceably along his way, ran, and the policeman fired a shot and the young man was slain; he was not the one whom the

policeman thought he was. Such is the sanctity of human life under the state! Surely you cannot believe that this is the highest interpretation of law, nor the highest law. See to it that it is changed. It is not the man's fault if he chooses to serve in that capacity; he is commanded to do a thing and he does it, if he has a high conception of his duty he may resign, but if he consents to do a thing he must do it. But it is the duty of the public which makes him their servant, it is the duty of the law-making power which these men obey, to make the standards of the law exemplary, to see to it that nothing is done wantonly or without proper care, lest it shall recoil.

There is a story in the Bible of a scaffold that was builded for the hanging of a man, and the one building it was hung thereon. It is possible that the laws that have been enacted, intended to control certain expressions of thought, may recoil on those who fashioned them. If under the charge of conspiracy men may be imprisoned for expressing opinions, pursuing what they conceive to be their rights, protesting peaceably against existing wrongs, it is barely possible that these laws, remaining on the statute-books, may turn upon those who fashioned them. For there is coming a larger majority than you know, they are coming up from among the people, who feel perhaps that their privileges and rights are infringed, and if secret societies of laboring men can be regarded as conspiracies, when laboring men are in power, which may be as soon as they know their strength, what is to prevent them from regarding the secret sessions of monopolies as conspiracies; what shall prevent them from arresting such societies as have been founded under what is called the protection of capital and respectable citizenship? If the Governor of Pennsylvania found it necessary to protest against the monopolies there, and one judge in the state declared that any body of men who united together to make the price of a public commodity higher, was conspiracy, if this shall come to be the judgment of many judges what will become of the conspiracy law of the state of Illinois? Be careful when making your laws that in your efforts to retaliate upon those who mean no harm to humanity, but only justice to themselves, you do not fashion the scriptural gallows.

But, as said before, the work of all true reform can be carried forward not only in a spirit of peace, but in such a spirit of moral exaltation and excellence as shall give offense to no man. But if from the side where wrong exists, which those combined in seeking redress for wrong protest against, there comes violence, what is to be done? Our way and the way which we hope is yours, and the way of every true Christian, should be to protest, but with such combined moral strength as will be attested in the whole world; but we doubt if any one of you who advocate the law of self-defense, who consider it no crime if a man attacks your property to defend it with his life, and you who are accustomed to have revolvers beneath your pillows in your house lest it shall be invaded by burglars, we doubt if any of you would so protest. The blow and the word may be used, but usually the blow comes first. It is precisely this spirit that we are protesting against. Let the word come but let the blow be only when you are driven, or that which is still better, let it be not at all. We call upon all those who may be present, who represent the interests of labor, to whom the cause of reform is dear, to whom that which shall finally be the release of man from bondage and poverty is sacred, to see to it that no act of violence is advocated or sanctioned by any friend of the laboring man; but if there is to be violence let the precedent of all history be carried out—let it come from the side of the oppressor; if there is to be violence let it come from those minions of error who need violence to sanction that which they do: if there is to be violence let error's hosts marshal her armies, let her have cordons of police, let there be violence, as it is called, in supporting "the majesty of the law," but let there be no violence on the part of those who ask redress for wrong; so shall it be witnessed beneath the eyes of men and angels, that although there is protest against wrong the hands of those who seek redress are not uplifted against their fellow-man.

The moral admonition of such conduct bears its own eloquence unto the world. You can stand many thousand strong with this moral force behind you, seeking steadfastly, confidently, and peaceably that which you desire; but in using weapons to serve God remember that it has been said, by one who represents the power of the Roman Catholic Church that he has defied, that *this* is God's way; he bears "The Cross of the New Crusade," that cross is stainless, it has no mark of human blood, he calls upon all within and without the church to follow this army of peace; he calls upon those who believe in a higher and better day for the brothers who toil, to turn with snowy banners and doves of peace. You cannot in any way reject its mandates, for it is the highest voice and we enjoin it upon you.

Ah, we do not deny there are those who turn back to the period of the French revolution and say: "see what bloody things are done under the name of revolution! But see what followed: peace, liberty, and the justice that men sought were not there. On either side the hosts of Bourbons, and the Orleanists mocking France! There up-rose a host of miscreants who, in the midst of these mistakes, turned the tide to their individual ambition; who were responsible for what followed that liberty the people sought. We assure you that Robespierre is not dead, but he is not to be found in the ranks of any reform, he is clothed with habiliments of power, he sits enthroned under the name of Mammon, behind the place that is misnamed justice, he does such things under the name of law as would make any reformer blush to own. We assure you that Marat and Danton are not dead, they sit enthroned also in many a chair of state, in many a hall of, so called, justice, behind the secret power of Mammon which holds enthralled the people. These spirits prevail not in their individual capacity, but in that which they represent. See to it that nothing is traced upon the banner of reform today that can bear any resemblance to that which they wrought; see to it that, you who are as numerous as the leaves upon the trees, your voices alone shall be uplifted against the wrongs that are to be redressed; see to it also that stainless and free from blame shall be your utterances, that the spirit of truth will work its way; that the worst that you can wish any man is that his conscience may sometime be quickened to perceive, if he has done wrong, the wrong that he has done.

We have no other wish than that those who this day are in ignorance because of the blindness of Mammon, or the bigotry of the senses, shall one day be brought to a knowledge of their error, that is all, further than this no man has a right to wish. Between God and the individual the conscience is the arbiter of every human act; to that highest tribunal we are willing to leave every human life to be judged. But for those states of want and misery; for the thousands of girls whose lives are wasted away in impoverishing toil; for the women whose helpless hands have no one to strengthen them in their hours of peril and in their hours of weariness; for those whose lives are ground out in the treadmill of the commerce of today, we must and we will uplift our voice. For those men who look their children in the face and cannot bring them innocent amusement, or books of art, or letters wherewith they may learn the alphabet and the language of your free country; for those men who toil early and late yet can find nothing, from the vastly accumulating wealth of this country, upon which they can base a promise of a home to their children; for those thousands, and continually augmenting hundreds of thousands, of men, we shall not fail to uplift our voice; we shall ask them to do nothing but steadily and constantly protest against wrongs until they are righted.

Why; people talk as though the millionaire had gained his millions by feeding the widow and the orphans instead of robbing them! People talk as though there was such sanctity in wealth that it had been the result of alms-giving instead of the absence of it! People seem to think that which any man has gained, unless he has gone out upon the street like a highway robber and knocked men down to get it, he has won by lawful means if he is not in the penitentiary!

Sometimes by one of those rare glimpses of light which illuminates even courts of justice in crowded cities, he does get into the penitentiary; when he does hosts of others fly away to Europe on tours of pleasure, or find it convenient to take up their place of residence across the border in Canada: indications of a clear and righteous conscience!

It is said that those who by steadily oppressing the hands of toil, by accumulating the product of their labor, win it honestly, that their brains devise the plan and they carry it forward in accordance with the laws of the land. If by that competition which you declare is the soul of trade the profits of a very large manufactory are cut down, those who own the institution at once try to devise means for keeping up the profits, they cannot do it without an increase of trade or without curtailing expenses, and the expenses are easier to curtail by reducing the wages of those who toil; so that he who has but one loaf of bread for his family today, will only have a half loaf tomorrow; and this is said to be an honest way of gaining ten or fifty thousand dollars in a year. We do not believe the man who does this will consider himself honest, he is as the world goes, but it is not the honesty that bears the test of the skies; and we mean to preach to that man until he shall discover that his conscience is something more than that seared thing that will enable him to do this unblushingly. We are not preaching to the laboring man, but we would like to preach to the millionaires; we would like to preach to those who approve of their methods; we would like to find their consciences; we would like to say: this is the school in which we wish to educate you as to the meaning of that which is moral, and right, and just, and we will begin with the Golden Rule, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the history of civilization; we will make you know that the things that you do, though justified in the laws which you make, are not justified in the light of that heaven which has all mankind in its keeping. It is you, millionaires, who must peaceably work out this reform if you see it; you, business men, who sanction these things; you who go to your daily pursuits and do not wish them disturbed.

When it was said that three or four million slaves should be set free unconditionally, a cry came up from the South and from those who were making profit upon slave labor in the North, that this would be an injustice, in a business sense, to those men and their families, and when it was proposed that the government should gradually buy up these slaves and set them free, the South refused the consideration of the subject, they wanted no freedom for their slaves. See how much treasure it took of the North and South to wipe out the rebellion which was started to support slavery, how many thousands of valuable lives, the flower of the land, of the North and South, sleep in graves that need never have been made if those men, who owned slaves could have seen that it was for their benefit, as well as for the interests of humanity, that slavery should not exist.

It is that same appeal which is made to day; we make it on behalf of those who toil; but it rests with you who govern the commerce of the world to redress these wrongs; it rests with you to mitigate these conditions; it rests with you to change that which oppresses the poor man under the mechanism of the existing order of things. If you do it, it will be with that perception, that quickened conscience, that enlightened judgment always gives to those who see in the signs of the times, in the intelligence that the republic requires, in the growing interests of humanity, that there cannot be centered in any state or class interests the wealth and majesty of this country.

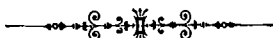
Will they see it? We will not answer the question; let time declare it; but if any voice reaches any conscience here to night, if any one aware that this is an imperative duty will set their thoughts to work free from prejudice, free from that fear with which paltry human aims have enthralled them, we have no doubt they will see it as hundreds of wise and good men see it to day, that this must come; peaceably if it can, but it *will* come.

We cannot close these remarks without enjoining upon you, in the light of that highest duty that Spiritualism teaches, which is no respecter of persons, that God bestows no favors upon any class; alike upon the poor and those who call themselves rich He bestows His favors and ministrations. See to it that you devote your thoughts to this subject in the spirit of that truth which we enjoin; see to it that you do not crowd it out of your lives by any paltry interests of your exchequer; but rising above mere superficial interests you shall, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of those children whom you love, for the sake of your households that are dear, endeavor to promote the welfare of the whole people, and thereby make more precious the sanctity of your home, and the inviolability of that law which has all humanity in its keeping.

As a paraphrase upon the poem which may have been read by many of you in your younger days we will close.

Last born of liberty divine
Put on the spirit's bright array,
Speak and the starless grave shall shine
Like the portals of the eternal day;
Rise, kindling with wondrous beam,
Let Olivet inspire the theme.

Cast off the garments rolled in blood;
And with thy spirit standing near
Crown thou thy children; wise and good
Oh bend to hear!
O, touch the soul, touch all her chords
With the omnipotence of words,
And lead up by this light divine
To highest heaven, God's perfect shrine.



BENEDICTION.

May no other name but God's which endures,
No other truth but the truth of heaven,
No other light or love be yours
Than that which God's perfect love hath given;
Thus crowned may you be glorified
In truth's immortal, living tide.

Amen.

BANNER x OF x LIGHT.

THE OLDEST JOURNAL IN THE WORLD DEVOTED TO THE
SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY.

Issued Weekly at 9 Bosworth Street (formerly Montgomery Place) Boston, Mass.
COLBY & RICH, Publishers and Proprietors.


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Six Months,	- - - - -	1.50
Three Months,	- - - - -	.75
Postage Free.		

ADVERTISEMENT published at twenty cents per line for the first, and fifteen cents per line for each subsequent insertion.

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